

Amendments to the Claims:

1. **(Original)** A method of cooking food by preheating wherein a foodstuff for cooking by heating, the main component of which is animal protein and which is to be refrigerated or chilled, is preheated to a temperature not less than the temperature at which protein is denatured and less than a cooking temperature before said foodstuff is refrigerated or chilled.
2. **(Original)** A method of cooking food by preheating as claimed in claim 1 wherein means for said preheating is electric heating in which said foodstuff is heated by passing an electric current to heat it with Joule heat.
3. **(Currently amended)** A method of cooking food by preheating as claimed in claim 1 ~~or 2~~ wherein the temperature for said preheating is not less than 30 °C and less than 135 °C.
4. **(Currently amended)** A method of cooking food by preheating as claimed in ~~any of claims 1-3~~ claim 1 wherein said foodstuff is refrigerated after said preheating without going through a precooling step.
5. **(Original)** A foodstuff to be cooked by heating, said foodstuff having animal protein as main component and being to be refrigerated or chilled for storage, characterized in that before said foodstuff is refrigerated or chilled, it is preheated to a temperature not less than the temperature at which protein is denatured and less than a cooking temperature.
6. **(New)** A method of cooking food by preheating as claimed in claim 2 wherein the temperature for said preheating is not less than 30 °C and less than 135 °C.

7. **(New)** A method of cooking food by preheating as claimed in claim 2 wherein said foodstuff is refrigerated after said preheating without going through a precooling step.

8. **(New)** A method of cooking food by preheating as claimed in claim 3 wherein said foodstuff is refrigerated after said preheating without going through a precooling step.